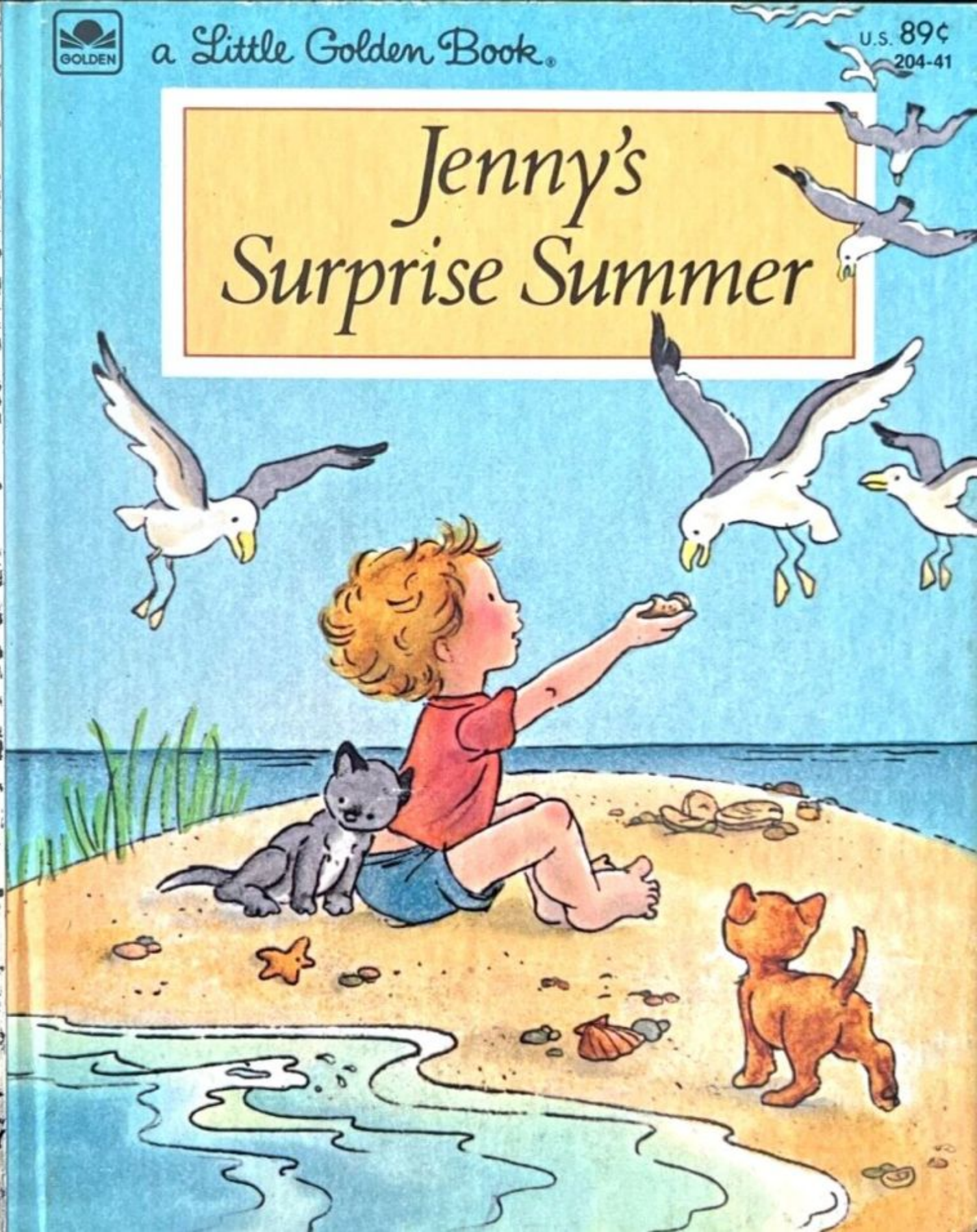
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Jenny's Surprise Summer




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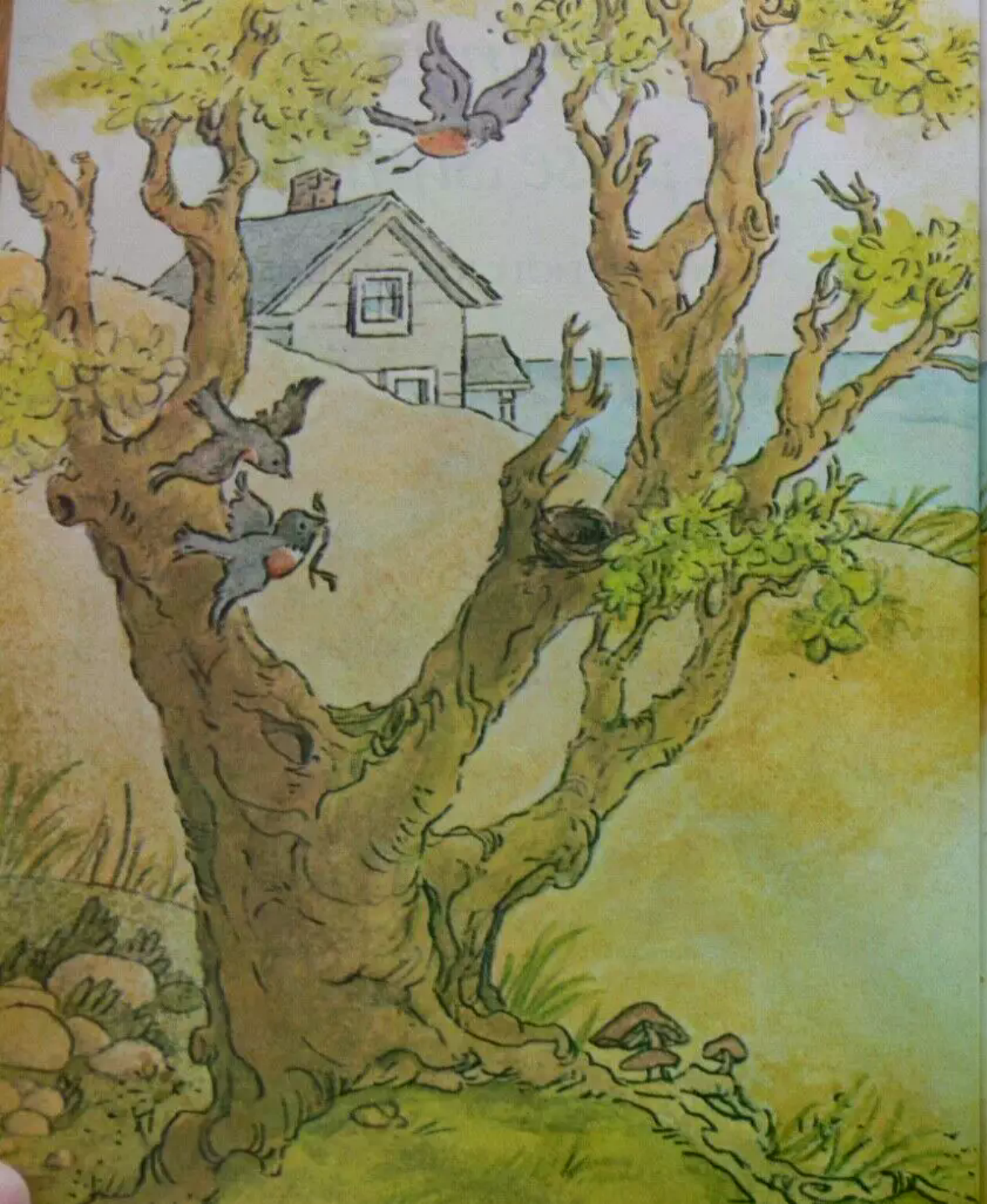
Jenny's Surprise Summer

STORY AND PICTURES BY EUGENIE



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FOR MOST of the year, Jenny lived in the city. But in the summer, she visited her grandmother in a house by the beach.

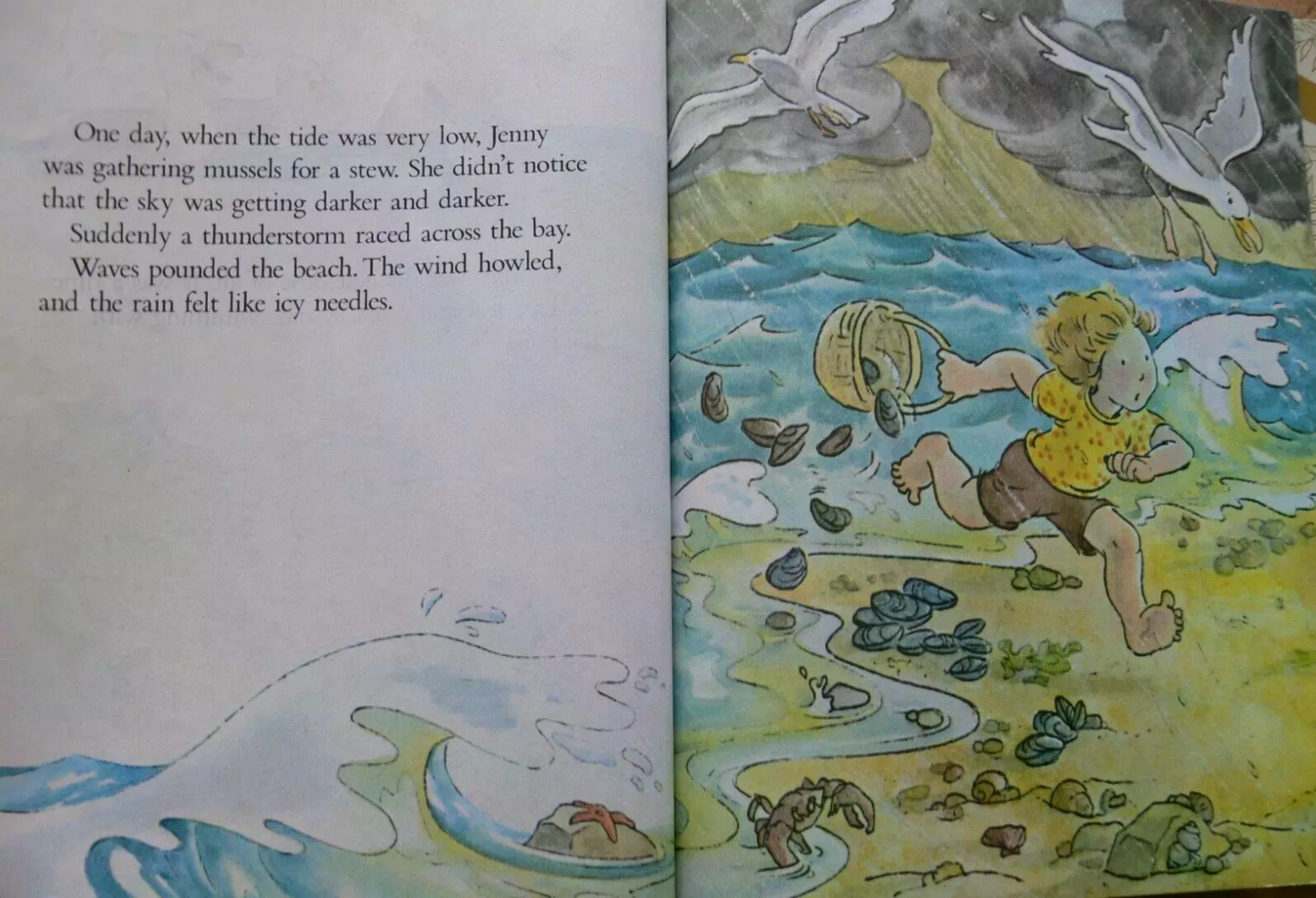


Summer was the best time of all. It was a time for bare feet and seashells and swimming with the gulls.

One day, when the tide was very low, Jenny was gathering mussels for a stew. She didn't notice that the sky was getting darker and darker.

Suddenly a thunderstorm raced across the bay.

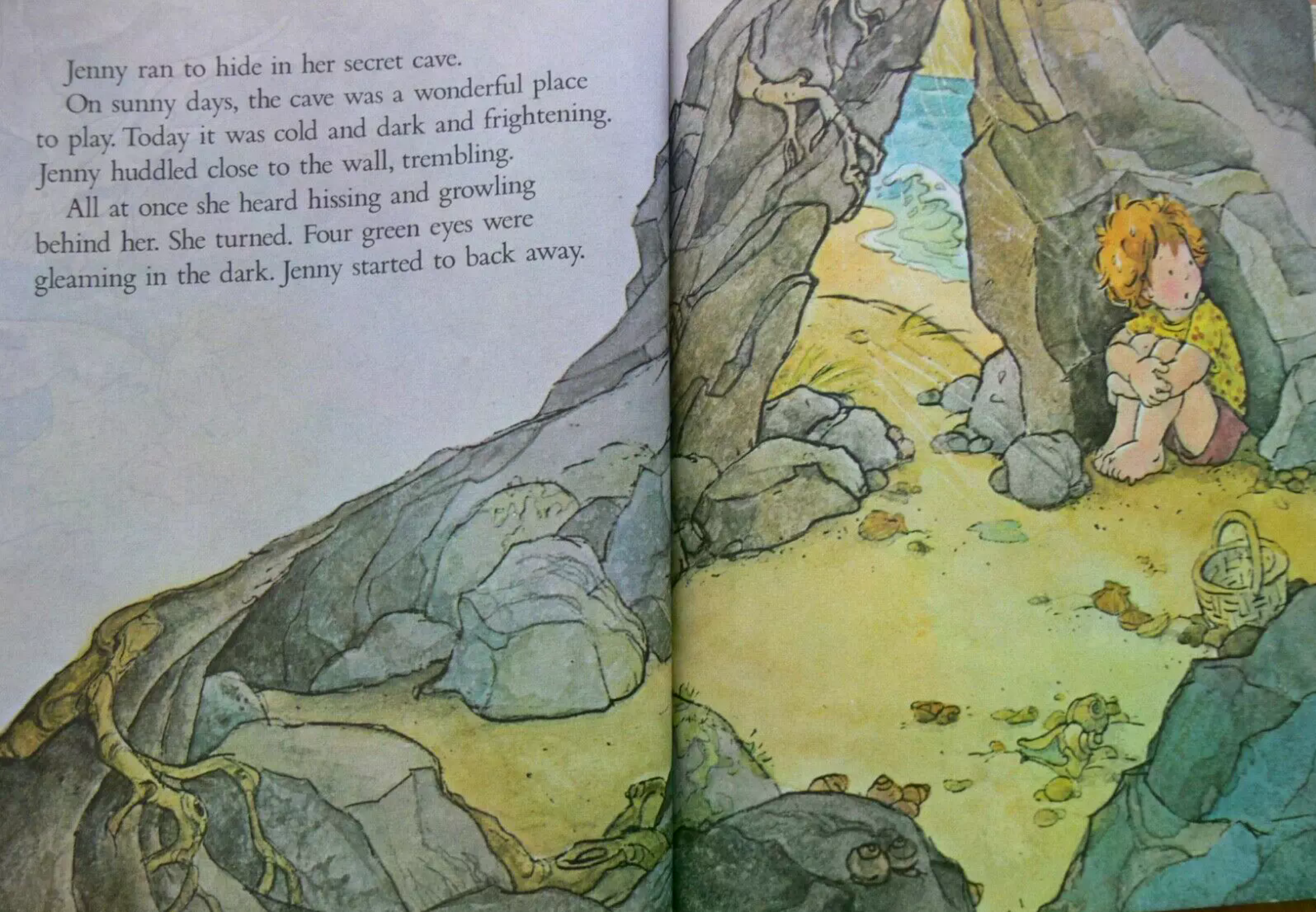
Waves pounded the beach. The wind howled, and the rain felt like icy needles.



Jenny ran to hide in her secret cave.

On sunny days, the cave was a wonderful place to play. Today it was cold and dark and frightening. Jenny huddled close to the wall, trembling.

All at once she heard hissing and growling behind her. She turned. Four green eyes were gleaming in the dark. Jenny started to back away.





Then the hissing and growling turned into mewing. Jenny discovered that the gleaming green eyes belonged to two tiny kittens. They looked just as frightened and cold as Jenny.

She picked them up and gave them a big hug. Then she tucked them under her shirt to get warm.



As soon as the storm was over, Jenny started for home. Just outside the cave she met Granny, who had come out to look for her when the rain started.

"Look, Granny," she said. "Look what I found!"





When they got home, Granny and Jenny put on dry clothes. Then they gave the kittens a dish of warm milk and settled down by the fire.

Jenny decided to call the orange kitten Pumpkin and the gray one Smoky. As she stroked their soft fur, she thought about how lucky she was to have found them.

"I've always wanted a kitten," she said to Granny. "Now I have two!"

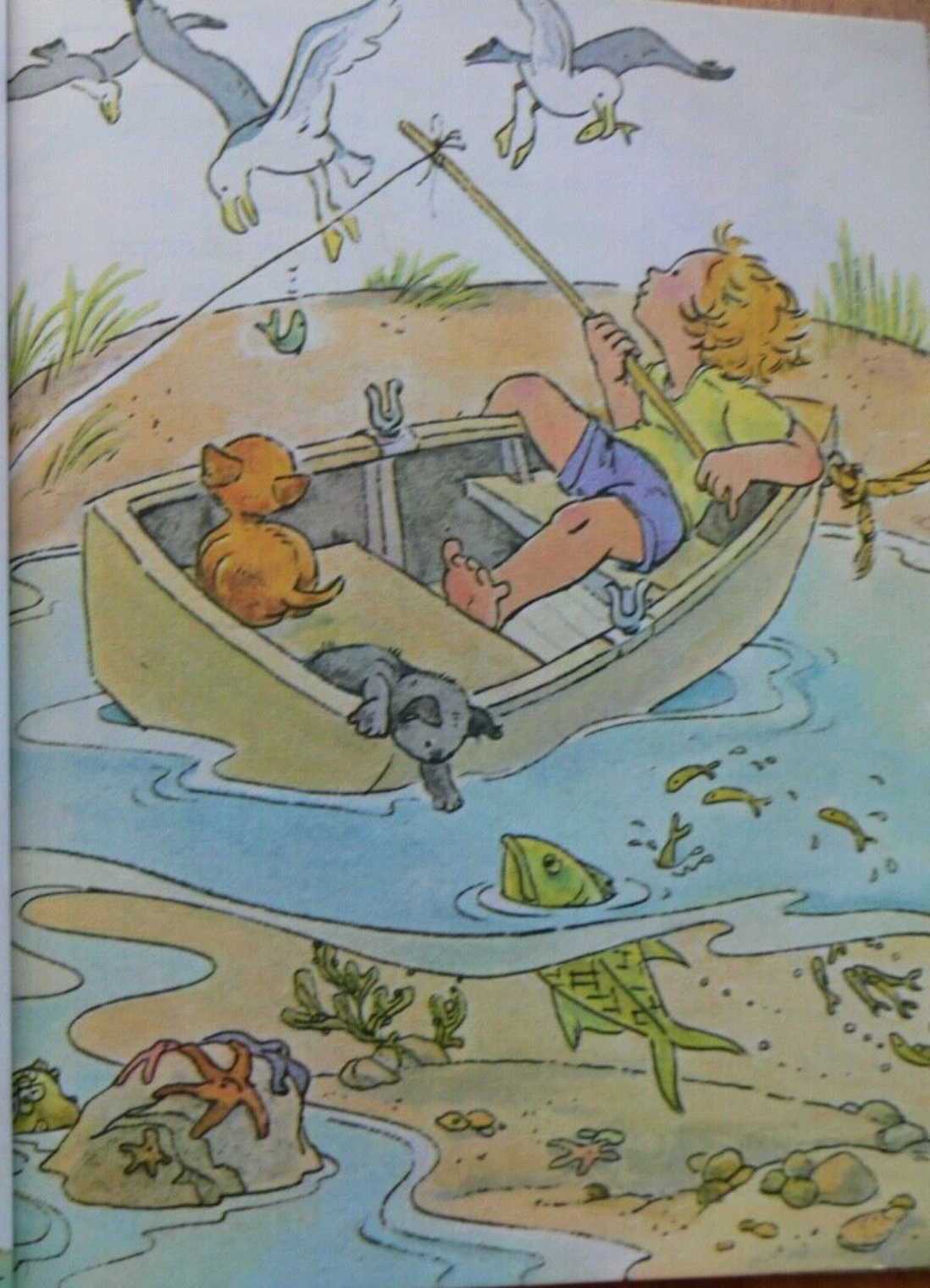


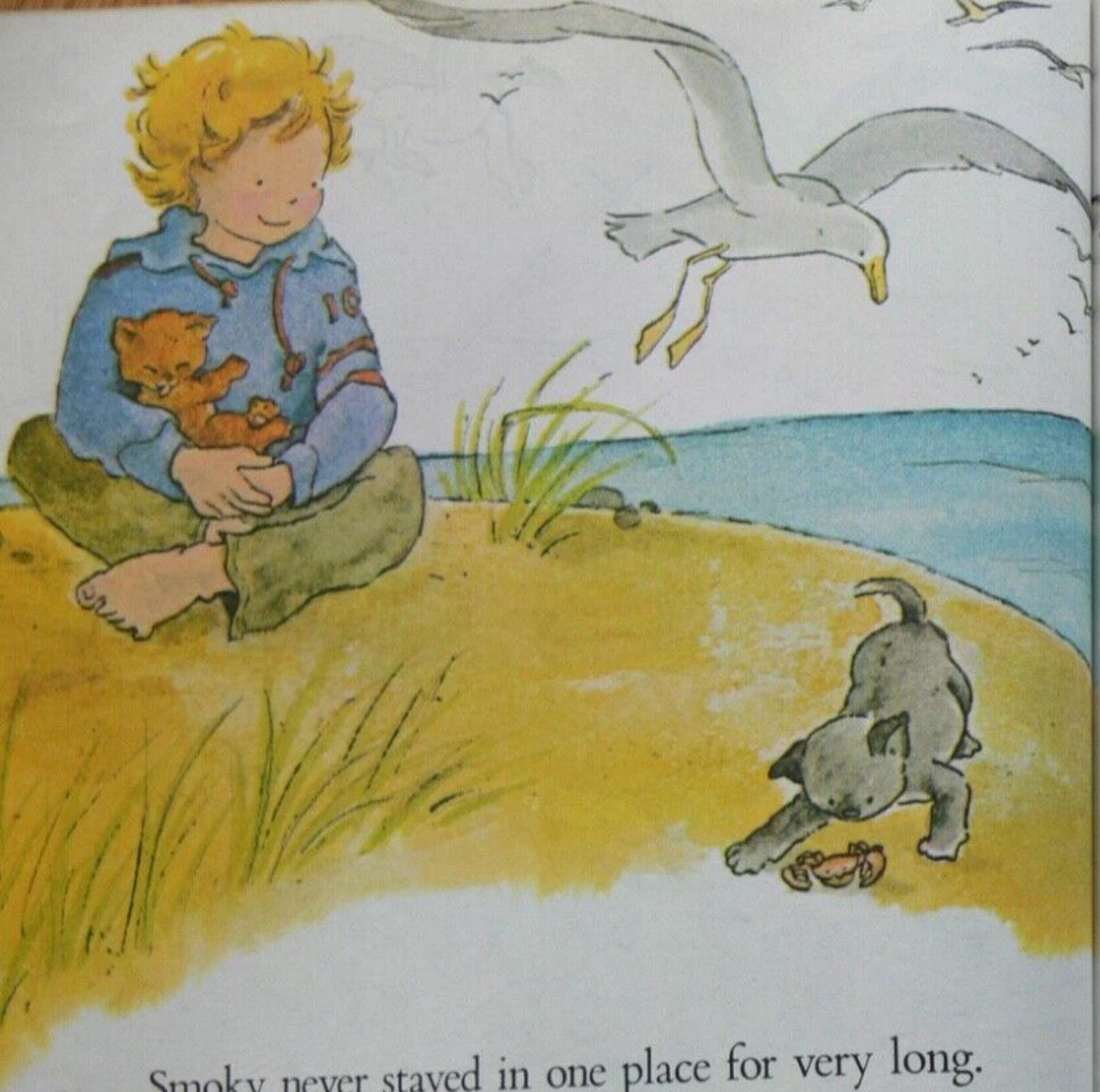
That night Jenny's parents telephoned. She told them about the wonderful surprise she'd found in the cave. But when she asked if she could take the kittens home with her at the end of the summer, all her parents said was, "Well, we'll see...."



For the rest of the summer, Jenny played with her kittens. She climbed the apple tree with them, built sand castles for them to knock down, and took them fishing in her little boat.







Smoky never stayed in one place for very long. He scampered up and down the beach, chasing crabs and minnows, playing with snails, and darting away from the waves. Pumpkin was happiest sitting in Jenny's lap.

Every night Smoky went hunting out on the beach, but he was always back by morning. And every night Pumpkin slept at Jenny's feet.

As the end of the summer drew near, Jenny began to worry. She would be going back to the city soon. What if her parents said she couldn't keep the kittens?

The night before her parents came, Jenny couldn't sleep at all.



The next day Jenny was glad to see her mom and dad. But when she asked about the kittens, her parents said, "Two kittens would be too much trouble in an apartment." Jenny was heartbroken.

"Well," said her mom finally, "maybe one kitten would be okay."

But Jenny loved both kittens. How could she decide which one to take?





Jenny took the kittens up to the attic and sat down on Granny's old steamer trunk. Pumpkin curled up in her lap and purred. Smoky chased balls of yarn and pounced at shadows.

Jenny scratched Pumpkin's back and watched Smoky play. "Pumpkin is quiet and calm," she thought, "and Smoky is lively and bouncy. Pumpkin likes to snuggle up at home, and Smoky likes to hunt and romp on the beach."

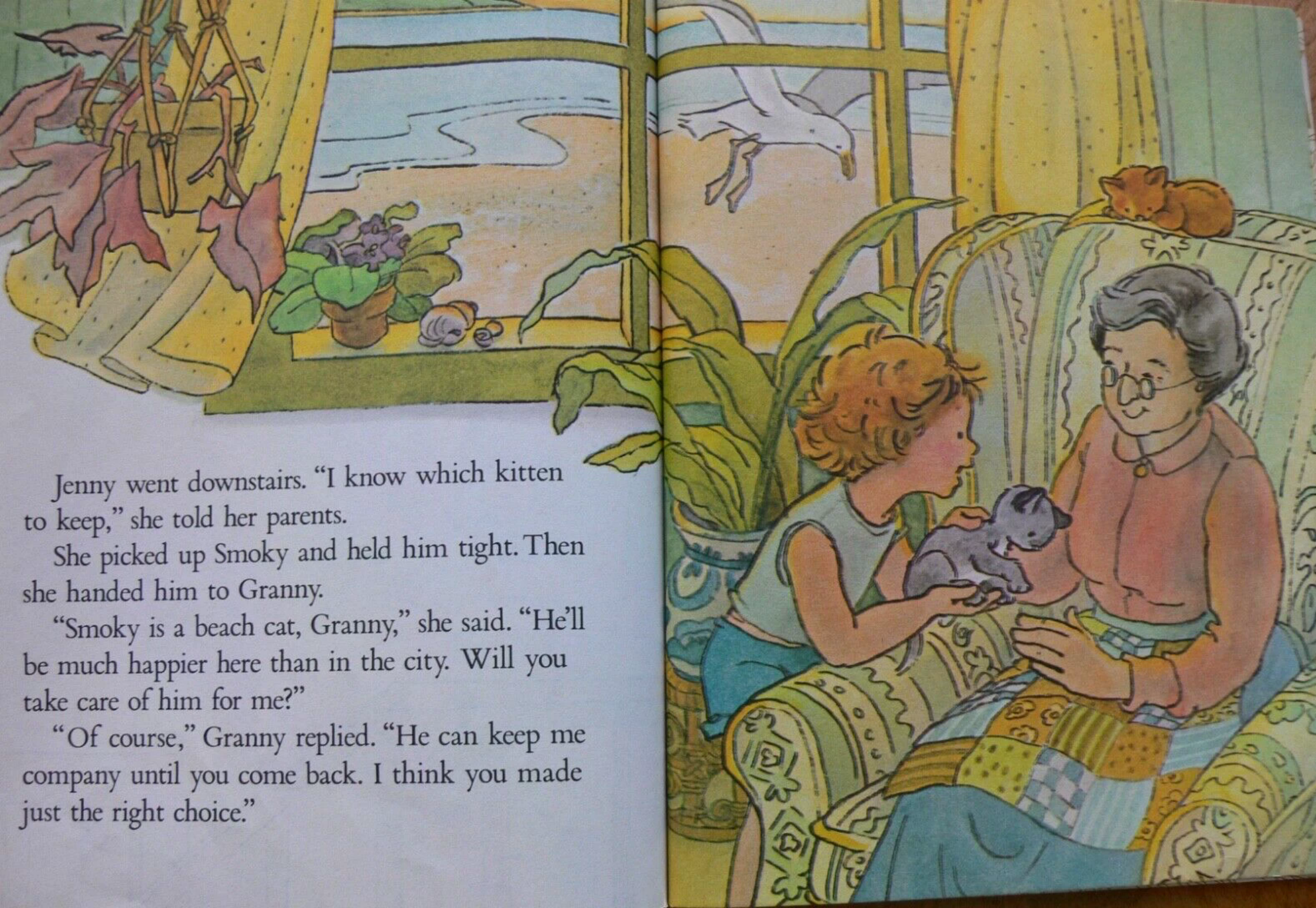
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All at once, Jenny knew the answer.



Jenny went downstairs. "I know which kitten to keep," she told her parents.

She picked up Smoky and held him tight. Then she handed him to Granny.

"Smoky is a beach cat, Granny," she said. "He'll be much happier here than in the city. Will you take care of him for me?"

"Of course," Granny replied. "He can keep me company until you come back. I think you made just the right choice."

As Jenny started back to the city with her parents, she hugged Pumpkin. She knew he would be happy in the cozy city apartment.



And next year, when she came back to Granny's, she and Smoky and Pumpkin would all be together again, ready to look for new summer surprises.

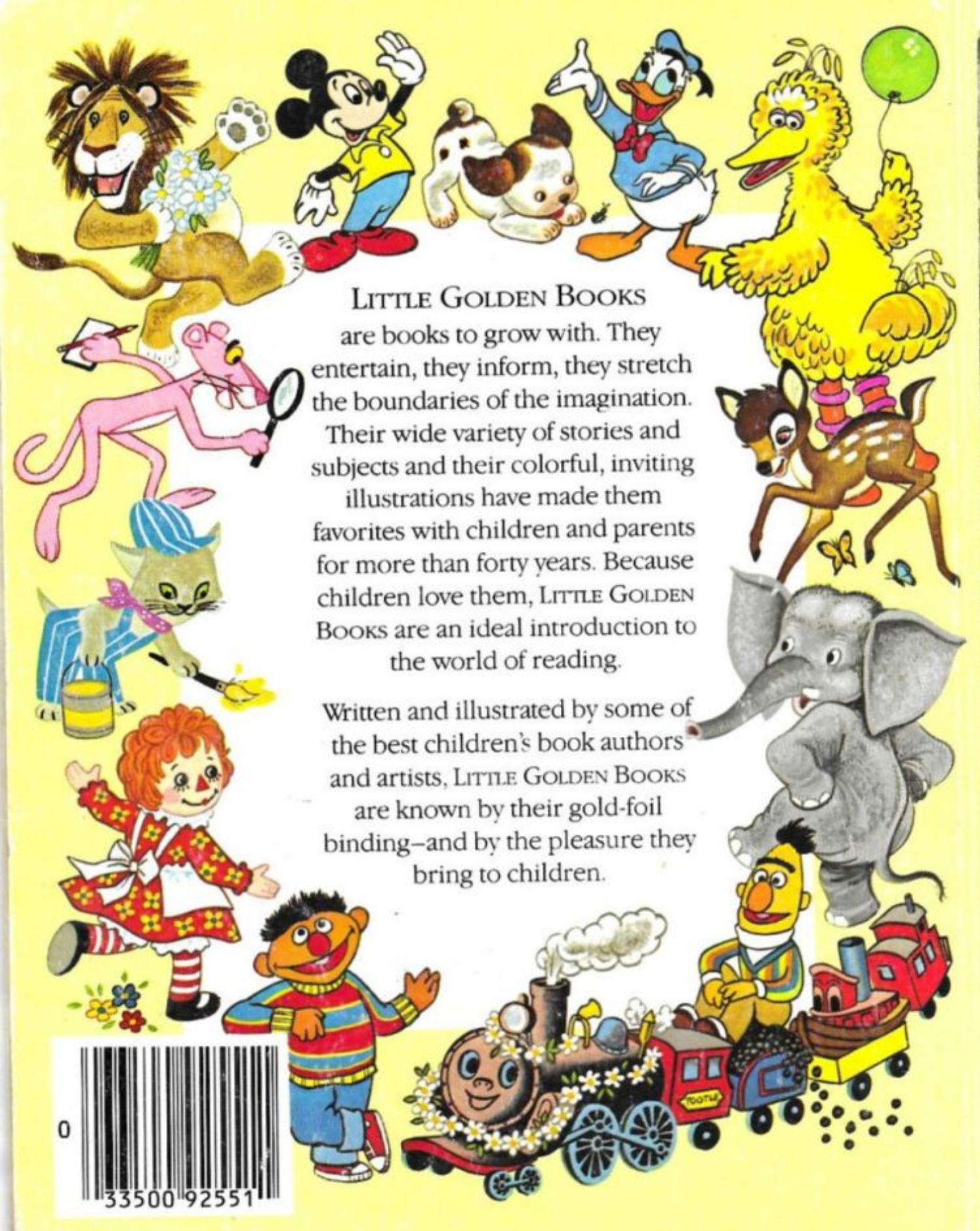


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